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Queen's University at Kingston

THE DISCOVERY

—OF—

BURLINGTON BAY

With some Accounts of the Aborigines of the Province
of Ontario and the State of New York.

A regular meeting of the Hamilton association was held on Jan. 12th, in the council chamber, City Hall, the President, Dr. McDonald, in the chair. There was a large attendance of members and visitors.

After the transaction of routine business, Mr. B E Charlton read the following paper, entitled as above :

Two and a half centuries ago, or to be more correct say about the year 1634, a glance at this portion of the continent of North America, finds the French re established at Quebec, and also in a small way at Hochelaga, now Montreal. And the Dutch at New Holland and Manhattan, now respectively Albany and New York.

Of the Indian tribes, the two prominent nations were the Hurons, allies of the French, in the north, extending from lake Simcoe around the Georgian bay and along the French and Ottawa rivers ; and, on the other hand, the fierce Iroquois to the south, extending eastward from the Niagara river, and south from lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence. The former trading with the French at Montreal and Quebec, by way of the Ottawa ; the latter trading with the Dutch on the Hudson, but hostile to everybody, their hand being against every man. Thus it occurred that while the Jesuit missionaries, those indomitable pioneers of discovery, became familiar (through following the return of Indian bands from their trading expeditions), with the great northern waterway of the Ottawa and French rivers on the one hand, and lake Champlain, the Hudson and Richelieu rivers on the other, the now

greater waterway of the Upper St. Lawrence, Lakes Ontario, Erie, &c. was for a long period entirely unknown. This is to be accounted for in the fact that these forming as they did, the dividing line between those two hostile nations, were too dangerous to be used as a thoroughfare.

Some four or five of those Jesuit missionaries had for several years been laboring among the numerous Huron towns along the east coast of the Georgian bay, then known as the Great Fresh Sea, with very indifferent success, but with a zeal and courage under hardships and cruelties worse than death, and even martyrdom itself, that won respect even from their tormentors. They were in the habit of sending home periodically to their superiors in France, reports, or relations, as they are called, of all their transactions, giving the most circumstantial details of every event which came under their notice, even to the surreptitious baptizing of an event of an unfriendly savage. These Jesuit relations, many of which have been published, afford us the earliest glimpses of the birth of Canadian history. The missionaries to the Hurons, though accustomed to make excursions in various directions up and down through the northern country, do not seem to have penetrated nearer to the ground upon which we now stand than Lake Simcoe, that being the southern limit of the Huron lands, for lying to the south of the Hurons and along the north shore of Lake Erie, between the Niagara and Detroit rivers, was the small tribe called by the French the

Neuters. This tribe, though considered a small one, had forty populous towns and villages. Situated as they were, however, between the greater nations of the Hurons on the one side, and the Iroquois on the other, and fearful of giving offense to either, they rejected most decidedly all recorded attempts of the Jesuits to penetrate their country.

The intrepid Champlain, too, had made an excursion up the Ottawa and along the shores of the Georgian Bay, and being persuaded to join the Hurons in a foray against the Iroquois passed with the Indian army from Lake Simcoe through the chain of lakes in the vicinity of Lindsay along the Trent river to its mouth, through the Bay of Quinte, discovering Lake Ontario, and crossing the same in canoes to the Iroquois country, landing near Oswego, where they laid siege to an Indian town surrounded with a triple stockade, upon which were mounted galleries for warriors, who fired arrows and stones and poured water upon fires built upon the outside, and defended their works generally with such courage that their assailants had to retire discomfited.

But some years later than the date above given, the Iroquois, becoming more formidable, burst across the Niagara river and Lake Ontario with a fierceness which nothing could withstand. They captured one Huron town after another, slaughtering, torturing and sometimes eating their captives, till finally in 1649 a general massacre took place, ending in the destruction of the whole nation with the exception of two small bands, one of which went westward and became absorbed in the powerful tribes about Lake Superior, and the other followed the Jesuits to Quebec. At the present day, at the Indian village of Lorette, some few miles from Quebec, may be found the sole survivors of the once mighty Huron nation.

Some unpublished manuscripts, having reference to explorations in America, have lately been discovered in the Bibliotheque Nationale, in Paris, among which was a journal giving an account of an expedition in 1669 by La Salle, whose name stands almost, if not quite, at the head of the intrepid explorers of this continent, and two Sulpician missionaries, who started from Montreal in canoes, passed up the St. Lawrence, along the south shore of Lake Ontario, and made a short stay on the shore of Burlington bay.

I shall beg leave to introduce to your attention this evening an extract from the journal in question as the basis of my present paper. The map annexed to the journal forms an interesting illustration of the knowledge acquired by the party of the form and

size of the North American lakes during their long pioneer voyage from Montreal to Sault Ste. Marie. A copy of the original, which is in the possession of a gentleman of Buffalo, measures $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet in length by $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet in breadth, and I am happy to say that I am in possession of a tracing of a small portion thereof, showing the localities of this vicinity exactly as they appear in the original. The map is covered with annotations in the French language.

The missionaries attached to the expedition were Francois Dollier de Casson, and Rene de Brehart de Galinee, both attached to the order of St. Sulpice. The former had been a calvary officer under Marshall Tussenne, and was at the date of the expedition superior of the seminary belonging to the order at Montreal. His strength was so prodigious that he was said to be able to carry two men sitting one on each hand. Galinee, the historian of the enterprise, had no little reputation as a surveyor and astronomer. Both priests were ardent and zealous for the conversion of the heathen to the Roman faith, and had long been waiting for some favorable opportunity to penetrate for that purpose the vast and unexplored regions of the west.

La Salle, then 26 years of age, had resided in Canada three years, and had not yet acquired the renown which his subsequent adventures and explorations affixed to his name, but the opportunities which he had enjoyed for intercourse with the Iroquois and other western tribes, who were accustomed to visit Montreal for the purpose of trade, had not been neglected. From them he had heard of the Ohio, the Mississippi and of the boundless forests and prairies through which they flowed. They had told him of the vast lakes as yet unexplored save by their frail canoes, on the borders of which were inexhaustible mines yielding the richest ores of iron and copper. His imagination kindled at the recital and so great was his ambition to accomplish his favorite object, that he sold the possessions he had acquired in Canada to realize the means of defraying the expenses of an expedition to test the truth of the Indian narrations. He resolved to ascend the St. Lawrence, and passing through the chain of western lakes, to seek for the great river, that, having its source in the Iroquois country flowed, according to Indian authority, into a far distant sea, and which Champlain and L'Escarbot had confidently hoped might be the westerly road to China and Japan.

In the summer of 1669 La Salle organized with the two Sulpicians, a joint expedition to accomplish their several purposes—the for-

mer to prosecute his discoveries in the west, and the missionaries to baptise the Nephites they should secure among the tribes found in the valley of the Ohio, the Mississippi and the lakes. When everything was ready for a speedy departure, the unfortunate assassination of an Iroquois chief by three French soldiers at Montreal, detained them fifteen days, and threatened a renewal of the war between the Iroquois and French, which had just then happily terminated. The execution of the guilty soldiers propitiated the offended Iroquois. All fear of reprisals being allayed, the party started on the 6th day of July—La Salle with fifteen men in four canoes, and Du Casson and Galinee with seven men in three canoes. They ascended the St. Lawrence, threading the intricate channels of the Thousand Islands, carrying their canoes and effects around the numerous and difficult portages they met by the way, and at length after twenty-seven days of incessant toil, in which they suffered severely from sickness and exposure, they reached the broad expanse of Lake Ontario. Coasting along its southern shore they landed on the 10th of August at the mouth of Ironquoit bay, four miles east of the Genessee river, their intention being to procure a guide from the Indian town of Gannagaro, on what is now known as Broughton Hill, just south of Victor station, on the New York Central railway, and midway between Rochester and Canandaigua.

In the translation of the journal of Galinee, which follows the original, has been adhered to as closely as the obscure and antiquated French in which it is written would admit.

EXTRACT FROM THE JOURNAL OF GALINEE.

"After 35 days of very difficult navigation we arrived at a small river called by the Indians Karontagonat (the Iroquois name for Ironquoit Bay), which is the nearest point on the lake to Sonantouan, and about one hundred leagues southwest of Montreal. I took the latitude of this place on the 26th of August, 1669. with my Jacobstaff. As I had a very fine horizon on the north, no land, but the open lake, being visible in that direction, I took the altitude on that side as being the least liable to error.

We had no sooner arrived at this place than we were visited by a number of Indians, who came to make us small presents of Indian corn, pumpkins, blackberries and whortleberries, fruits of which they had abundance. We made presents in return of knives, awls, needles, glass beads, and other articles which they prize, and with which we were well provided.

Our guides urged us to remain in this place till the next day, as the chiefs would not fail to come in the evening with provisions to escort us to the village. In fact, night had no sooner come than a large troop of Indians, with a number of women loaded with provisions, arrived and encamped near by, and made for us bread of Indian corn and fruit. They did not desire to speak to us in regular council, but told us we were expected in the village, to every cabin of which word had been sent, to gather all the old men at the council, which would be held for the purpose of ascertaining the object of our visit.

M. Dollier, M. de La Salle and myself consulted together in order to determine in what manner we should act, what we should offer for presents, and how we should give them. It was agreed that I should go to the village with M. de La Salle for the purpose of obtaining a captive taken from the nation which we desired to visit who could conduct us thither, and that we should take with us eight of our Frenchmen, the rest to remain with M. Dollier in charge of the canoes. This plan was carried out, and the next day, August 12, had no sooner dawned, than we were notified by the Indians that it was time to set out. We started with ten Frenchmen and forty or fifty Indians, who compelled us to rest every league, fearing we should be too much fatigued. About half way we found another company of Indians who had come to meet us. They made us presents of provisions and accompanied us to the village. When we were within about a league of the latter the halts were more frequent, and our company increased more and more, until we finally came in sight of the great village, which is in a large plain, about two leagues in circumference. In order to reach it we had to ascend a small hill (now Broughton Hill) on the edge of which the village is situated.

As soon as we had mounted the hill we saw a large company of old men seated on the grass, waiting for us. They had left a convenient place in front, in which they invited us to sit down.

This we did, and at the same time an old man, nearly blind, and so infirm that he could hardly support himself, arose, and in a very animated tone, delivered a speech, in which he declared his joy at our arrival; that we must consider them as our brothers; that they would regard us as theirs; and in that relation they invited us to enter their village, where they had prepared a cabin for us until we were ready to disclose our purpose.

We thanked them for their civilities, and told them through our interpreter that we would on the next day declare to them the

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object of our expedition. This done, an Indian, who officiated as master of ceremonies, came to conduct us to our lodgings.

We followed him and he led us to the largest cabin in the village, which they had prepared for our residence, giving orders to the women belonging to it not to let us want for anything. In truth they were at all times very faithful during our sojourn, in preparing our food and in bring the wood necessary to afford us light over night.

This village, like those of the Indians, is nothing but a collection of cabins, surrounded with palisades 12 or 13 feet high, bound together from the top and supported at the base, behind the palisade, by large masses of wood at the height of a man. The curtains are not otherwise flanked, but form a simple enclosure, perfectly square, so that these forts are not any protection. Besides this, the precaution is seldom taken to place them on the bank of a stream, or near a spring, but on some hill, where ordinarily they are quite distant from water.

On the evening of the 12th we saw all the other chiefs arrive so as to be in readiness for the council which was to be held next day."

Here follows an interesting account of the council meeting, and of their stay of ten days in the village, but too lengthy for this paper.

He says ' during this interval the Indians obtained some brandy from the Dutch at New Holland, and many times the relatives of the person who had been killed at Montreal a few days before we left there, threatened in their intoxication to despatch us with their knives. In the meantime we kept so well on our guard that we escaped all injury.

During this interval I saw the saddest spectacle I had ever witnessed. I was informed one evening that some warriors had arrived with a prisoner, and had placed him in a cabin near our own. I went to see him and found him seated with three women who vied with each other in bewailing the death of a relation who had been killed in the skirmish in which the prisoner had been captured. He was a young man 18 or 20 years old, very well formed, whom they had clothed from head to foot since his arrival.

I thought, therefore, that I would have an opportunity to demand him for our guide, as they said he was one of the Tongenhas (probably from Ohio). I then went to M. de La Salle for that purpose, who told me that these Indians were men of their word, that since they had promised us a captive they would give us one, that it mattered

little whether it was this one or another, and it was useless to press them. I therefore gave myself no further trouble about it. Night came on and we retired.

The next day no sooner dawned than a large company entered our cabin to tell us that the captive was about to be burned, and that he had asked to see the Frenchman.

I ran to the public place to see him, and found he was already on the scaffold, where they had bound him hand and foot to a stake. I was surprised to hear him utter some Algonquin words which I knew, although from the manner in which he pronounced them they were hardly recognizable. He made me comprehend at last that he desired his execution should be postponed until the next day. I conversed with the Iroquois through our interpreter, who told me that the captive had been given to an old woman in the place of her son who had been killed, that she could not bear to see him die, that all the family took such a deep interest in his suffering that they would not postpone his torture. The irons were already in the fire to torment the poor wretch.

On my part I told the interpreter to demand him in place of the captive they had promised, and I would make a present to the old woman to whom he belonged, but he was not at any time willing to make the proposition, alleging that such was not their custom, and the affair was of too serious a nature.

I even used threats to induce him to say what I desired, but in vain, for he was as obstinate as a Dutchman and ran away to avoid me.

I then remained alone near the poor sufferer who saw before him the instruments of his torture. I endeavored to make him understand that he could have no recourse but to God, and that he should pray to him thus: "Thou, who hast made all things, have pity on me. I am sorry not to have obeyed Thee, but if I should live, I will obey Thee in all things."

He understood me better than I expected. In the meantime I saw the principal relatives of the deceased approach him with a gun barrel, half of which was heated red hot. This obliged me to withdraw. I retired, therefore, with sorrow, and had scarcely turned away when the barbarous Iroquois applied the red hot gun barrel to the top of his feet, which caused the poor wretch to utter a loud cry. This turned me about and I saw the Iroquois, with a grave and sober countenance, apply the iron slowly along his feet and legs, and some old men who were smoking around the scaffold, and all the young

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people leaped with joy to witness the contortions which the severity of the heat caused in the poor sufferer.

While these events were transpiring, I retired to the cabin where we lodged full of sorrow at not being able to save the poor captive, and it was then that I realized, more than ever, the importance of not venturing too far among the people of this country, without knowing their language, or being certain of obtaining an interpreter.

As I was in my cabin, praying to God, and very sad, M. de La Salle came and told me he was apprehensive that, in the excitement he saw prevailing in the village they would insult us—that many would become intoxicated that day, and he had finally resolved to return to the place where we had left the canoes, and the rest of our people.

We told the seven or eight of our people who were there with us, to withdraw for the day to a small village, half a league from the large one where we were, for fear of some insult, and M. de La Salle and myself went to find M. Dollier, six leagues from the village.

There were some of our people barbarous enough to be willing to witness, from beginning to end, the torture of the poor prisoner, and who reported to us the next day, that his entire body had been burned with red hot irons for the space of six hours; that there was not the least spot left that had not been roasted. After that they had required him to run six courses past the place where the Iroquois were waiting for him, armed with burning clubs, with which they goaded and beat him to the ground when he attempted to join them.

Many took kettles full of coals and hot ashes, with which they covered him, as soon as, by reason of fatigue and debility, he wished to take a moment's repose. At length, after two hours of this barbarous diversion, they knocked him down with a stone, and throwing themselves upon him, cut his body in pieces. One carried off his head another an arm, a third some other member, which they put in the pot for a feast.

Many offered some to the Frenchmen, telling them there was nothing in the world better to eat, but no one desired to try the experiment.

During our stay at that village we enquired particularly about the road we must take in order to reach the Ohio river, and they all told us to go in search of it from Sonnon-

taoun. That it required six day's journey by land.*

This induced us to believe that we could not possibly reach it in that way, as we would hardly be able to carry, for so long a journey, our necessary provisions, much less our baggage. But they told us at the same time, that in going to find it by way of Lake Erie in canoes, we would have only a three days' portage before arriving at that river.

We were relieved from our difficulties in regard to a guide, by the arrival from the Dutch of an Indian who lodged in our cabin. He belonged to a village of one of the five Iroquois nations, which is situated at the end of Lake Ontario, for the convenience of hunting the deer and the bear, which are abundant in that vicinity. This Indian assured us that we would have no trouble in finding a guide—that a number of captives of the nations we desired to visit were there, and he would very cheerfully conduct us thither.

After departing we found a river† one eighth of a league broad and extremely rapid, forming the outlet or communication from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario. The depth of the river (for it is properly the St. Lawrence), is at this place extraordinary, for, on sounding close by the shore, we found fifteen or sixteen fathoms of water. This outlet is forty leagues long, and has, for ten or twelve leagues above its embouchure into Lake Ontario, one of the finest cataracts, or falls of water in the world, for all the Indians of whom I have enquired about it, say, that the river falls at that place from a rock higher than the tallest pines, that it is about two hundred feet. In fact we heard it from the place where we were, although from ten to twelve leagues distant, but the fall gives such a momentum to the water, that its velocity prevented our ascending the current by rowing, except with great difficulty. At a quarter of a league from the outlet where we were, it grows narrower, and its channel is confined between two very high, steep, rocky banks, inducing the belief that the navigation would be very difficult up to the cataract. As to the river above the falls, the current very often sucks into this gulf, from a great distance deer, and stags, elk and roebucks, that suffer themselves to be drawn from such a point in crossing the river, that they are compelled to descend the falls, and to be overwhelmed in its frightful abyss‡

† Niagara.

‡Galinee's description of the falls is probably the earliest on record. His account which is wholly derived from the Indians, is remarkably correct. If they had been visited by the Jesuits, prior to the time of this expedition, they have failed to relate the fact, or to describe them in

* The route they proposed to take was probably up the Genesee river to one of its sources crossing from thence to the head waters of the Alleghany River.

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Our desire to reach the village called Otinaoustaoua prevented our going to view that wonder, which I consider as so much the greater in proportion as the River St. Lawrence is one of the largest in the world. I will leave you to judge if that is not a fine cataract in which all the water in that river, having its mouth three leagues broad,§ falls from a height of 200 feet, with a noise that is heard not only at the place where we were, 10 or 12 leagues distant, but also from the other side of Lake Ontario, opposite its mouth, where M. Trouve told me he had heard it.

We passed the river, and finally, at the end of five days travel, arrived at the extremity of Lake Ontario, where there is a fine large sandy bay, at the end of which is an outlet of another small lake, which is there discharged.

Into this our guide conducted us about half a league, to a point nearest the village, but distant from it some 5 or 6 leagues, and where we unloaded our canoes.||

We waited here until the chief of the village came to meet us with some men to carry our effects. M. de La Salle was seized while hunting with a severe fever, which in a few days reduced him very low.

Some said it was caused by the sight of three large rattlesnakes which he had encountered on his way while ascending a rocky eminence. At any rate it is certain that it is a very ugly spectacle, for those animals are not timid like other serpents, but firmly wait for a person, quickly assuming a defensive attitude, coiling half the body from the tail to the middle as if it were a large cord, keeping the remainder entirely straight, and darting forward, sometimes 3 or 4 paces, all the time making a loud noise, with the rattle which it carries at the end of its tail. There are many in this place as large as the arm, six or seven feet long, and entirely black. It vibrates its tail very rapidly, making a sound like a quantity of melon or gourd seeds shaken in a box.

At length after waiting three days, the chiefs and some fifty Indians and squaws from the village came to see us.

We gave presents to obtain two captive slaves, and a third for carrying our effects to the village. The savages made us two presents. The first of fourteen or fifteen deerskins, to assure us they were going to conduct us to their village, the second of

about 5,000 shell beads, and afterwards two captives for guides. One of them belonged to the Codanos (Shawnees), and the other to the Nez Perces. They were both excellent hunters and seemed to be well disposed. Conducted by the Indians we proceeded to the village of Otinaouataona, arriving there on the 24th Sept., 1669."

Dropping the journal of Galinee at this point I might say that at this place, then but a small Iroquois village though twenty years before an important Neuter town, the missionaries had received such a hearty welcome as made one of them think seriously of spending the rest of his days there.

While there they provided their captive guide (the one allotted to the priests) with a coat, blanket, pot and knife, as equipment for their future journey. An Indian arrived, however, from the Dutch with a keg of brandy, and it was soon discovered that the said guide had sold or pledged his coat for ten mouthfuls. This greatly annoyed the worthy Father Galinee, who immediately seized the hypothecated coat and discharged the guide. The latter expressed great contrition, but finding he had no chance of being restored to favor, brought back all the things which had been given him, and introduced a fellow captive from the same tribe, who was accepted in his stead. As the affair made a good deal of stir in the village, the chiefs held a council and presented the missionaries with two thousand beads in order to cause them to forget the matter, and further made a great feast.

This Indian village appears to have been situated on the borders of a small lake in the township of Nelson, about 10 miles from Hamilton, known as Lake Medad, not far beyond Waterdown. Some seven years ago the writer having learned that an ancient Indian ossuary or bone pit had been discovered at this point, through the burrowing of a small animal called a woodchuck, had the curiosity to visit the place, and found it a most interesting one. The lake itself, a pretty sheet of water of some eight acres in extent is fed by abundant natural springs. On one side beneath an abrupt rocky bank, and from a rocky basin which may have been widened and cleared of loose stones ages ago, bursts out a noble spring of clear cold water, sufficient in capacity to supply the wants of a small city. A steep pathway cut deeply into the rock and earthly embankment by the feet of both wild animals and Indians in prehistoric times, leads from the spring up to a sloping plain of considerable extent, on which as yet but little modern cultivation has been accom-

their journals. The Niagara river is alluded to under the name of Ongniaehra, as the celebrated river of the Neuter nation, but no mention is made of the cataract.

§At the Gulf of St Lawrence.

| Oaklands.

plished. You can see scattered over this slope curious rounded heaps of about forty to one hundred feet long and ten wide, a spade at once reveals that they are heaps of ashes, containing many fragments of Indian pottery, bones of animals, and broken weapons. On a portion of the plain Indian corn had probably been cultivated. Here at some distant period had evidently been situated an important Indian town of the Neuter nation. This tribe as before mentioned, occupied the country between the Niagara and Detroit rivers. In their wars with the Indians of Michigan they acted with more ferocious cruelty than even the Huron or Iroquois, roasting and eating their prisoners of war of both sexes. The men going without clothing of any kind in summer. Their time of destruction however followed quickly upon that of the Hurons, for after the slaughter of the latter, the Iroquois turned all their fury upon the Neuters and left no survivors whatever.

Proceeding to the highest point of the plain quite at one side of the clusters of ash heaps, were discovered the Ossuaries. They consisted of three pits. One measuring forty feet long by seventeen wide and five in depth, and the two others circular about 12 feet in diameter and 7 feet in depth. Upon the former were two large pine stumps, the rings or growths of the larger numbering 125. All these pits were situated within a few yards of each other. In them were found partially decayed bones of several hundreds of persons of all ages, together with many curious articles, such as some 30 copper and brass kettles, varying in size from 3 to 26 inches in diameter, containing in one case two skeletons; in another a small bronze spoon, in several others the dust of a wooden spoon and traces of food. Also 8 or 10 large tropical shells, brought probably from the coast of Florida, and evidently used in the manufacture of antique shell beads or wampum.

Many hundreds of these shell beads were also obtained, together with beads made from porcelain, glass, stone, baked clay, obsidian, shale, etc., some round, others square, others oblong and several inches in length, of all sizes imaginable. With these were found antique pipes of stone and clay, many of them bearing extraordinary devices, figures of animals, and of human heads wearing the comical cap, noticed on similar relics found in Mexico and Peru.

There were also found the remains of several axes of the old French pattern; specimens of Indian pottery in the shape of vases or pots, made of coarse sand and clay, well baked and constructed evidently with the view of being suspended over a fire. Two

very handsome ones were obtained entire. In portions of the pits, skeletons were found entire or nearly so, and placed somewhat regularly, not only side by side but in layers upon each other; but in other parts all the small bones appeared to be wanting, and skulls and large bones mingled in the greatest possible confusion.

It seems quite clear that these pits were places of ancient Indian sepulture, and that on this spot were celebrated one or more of those great ceremonies called Feasts of the Dead which the Huron and other Indian tribes were in the habit of performing once in ten or twelve years. One of these feasts was witnessed by Father Brebeuff, a Jesuit missionary, in the year 1636 at the Indian town of Ossossane, a little east of Collingwood. He describes it in the following language. "At each village the corpses were lowered from their scaffolds and raised from their graves. Their coverings were removed and the hideous relics arranged in a row surrounded by the weeping, shrieking, howling concourse. Thus were gathered all the village dead for the last 12 years. Each family reclaimed its own, and immediately addressed itself to removing what remained of flesh from the bones. These were wrapped in skins, and, together with the recent corpses—which were allowed to remain entire, but which were also wrapped carefully in furs—were now carried to one of the largest cabins, and hung to the numerous cross poles, which, like rafters, support the roof.

Here the concourse of mourners seated themselves at a funeral feast, and as the squaws distributed food, a chief harangued the assembly, lamenting the loss of the deceased, and extolling their virtues. This solemnity over, the mourners began their march for Ossossane, uttering at intervals in unison a dreary wailing cry; and as they stopped to rest at night at some village on the way, the inhabitants came forth to meet them with a mournful hospitality. From every town processions like these were converging toward Ossossane, and thither, on the urgent invitation of the chiefs, we repaired. The capacious bark houses were filled to overflowing, and the surrounding woods gleamed with camp fires. Funeral games were in progress, the young men and women practicing archery and other foesses xeeriz prizes offered by the mourners in the name of their dead relatives. Some of the chiefs conducted us to the place prepared for the ceremony—a cleared area in the forest many acres in extent. In the midst was a pit about 10 feet deep and 30 wide. Around it was reared a high and strong scaffolding, and on this were placed several upright poles, with

DISCOVERY OF BURLINGTON BAY.

cross poles extended between, for hanging the funeral gifts and the remains of the dead.

We were lodged in a large bark house where more than a hundred of these bundles of mortality were hanging from the rafters. Amidst the throng of the living and the dead we spent a night which the imagination and the senses conspired to render almost insupportable. At length the officiating chiefs gave the signal to prepare for the ceremony. The relics were taken down, opened for the last time, and the bones caressed and fondled by the women amid paroxysms of lamentations. Then all the processions were formed anew, and, each bearing its dead, moved towards the area prepared for the last solemn rites. As they reached the ground they defiled in order, each to a spot assigned to it. Here the bearers of the dead laid their bundles on the ground. Fires were now lighted, kettles slung, and around the entire circle of the clearing the scene was like a fair or caravansary. This continued till three in the afternoon, when the gifts and bones were repacked. Suddenly, at a signal from the chiefs, the crowd ran forward from every side towards the scaffold, scaled it by rude ladders, and hung their relics and gifts to the forest of poles which surmounted it. Then the ladders were removed, and a number of chiefs standing on the scaffold harangued the crowd below, while other functionaries were lining the grave throughout with rich robes of beaver skin. Three large copper kettles were next placed in the middle and then ensued a scene of hideous confusion. The bodies which had been left entire were brought to the edge of the grave, flung in and arranged in order at the bottom by ten or twelve Indians stationed there for that purpose, amid the wildest excitement and the uproar of many hundred mingled voices. When this part of the work was done night was fast closing in. The concourse bivouacked around the clearing and lighted their campfires under the brows of the forest which hedged in the scene. We withdrew to the village, when an hour before dawn we were aroused by a terrible clamor. One of the bundles of bones, tied to a pole on the scaffold, had chanced to fall into the grove. This accident precipitated the closing act and perhaps increased its frenzy. Guided by the unearthly din, and the broad glare of flames, fed with heaps of fat pine logs, we soon reached the spot and saw what seemed to us an image of pandemonium. All around blazed countless fires, and the air resounded with discordant outcries.

The naked multitude, on, under and around

the scaffold were flinging the remains of their dead, pell mell into the pit, where we discovered men who, as the ghastly shower fell around them, arranged the bones in their places with long poles. All was soon over; earth, logs and stones were cast upon the grave, and the clamor subsided into a funeral chant, dreary and lugubrious."

Such was the origin of those numerous and strange sepulchres which have been the wonder and perplexity of the early settlers of the county of Simcoe, similar in every respect to the one at Lake Medad where stood the Iroquois village visited by La Salle as before mentioned in the year 1669.

Briefly in closing I might add, that La Salle finding the season far advanced, and seeing before him the uninviting prospect of a winter camp in the woods, parted from the Sulpicians at Otnaoutawa after solemn mass and probably returned to Montreal. We hear of him nine years later, in company with Father Hennepin, building the "Griffin" above the Falls of Niagara, the first schooner which floated on Lake Erie.

The missionaries having parted from La Salle, left Otnaoutawa on the 1st. October with their retinue, accomplished the remainder of the portage to the Grand river, which they reached about Galt, and descended its difficult and tortuous channel. In fourteen days they reached its mouth and encamped on the northern shore of Lake Erie, which they describe as a "vast sea tossed by tempestuous winds." They built a camp for the winter at or near the mouth of the river and employed their time in hunting game and drying the flesh of the larger animals for subsistence on their journey. To this they added 70 bushels of nuts of various kinds, and apples, plums and grapes, (all wild of course.) They spent the winter at this place, and six months afterwards on March 23d 1670 they erected a cross bearing the arms of Louis XIV of France, and took formal possession of the country in the name of that king. Three days afterwards they resumed their voyage to the west, and while encamped upon Long Point a violent gale in the night arose, destroying the contents of one of their canoes. They deplored the loss of their powder and lead, but most of all of their holy chapel, without which the Eucharist could not be celebrated. They proceeded onward, however, through Lake Erie, Detroit river, and Lake Huron even to Sault de Ste. Marie, but becoming discouraged returned thence to Montreal by way of the French and Ottawa rivers. An immense distance truly to be paddled in open canoes.

